

THE  
MONTHLY



GULL  
BULLETIN

VOLUME 19

SAN FRANCISCO, OCTOBER, 1937

NUMBER 10

### An Unusual Nesting Site of Barn Swallows

While at Walter's Mineral Springs, Napa County, California, during the week commencing July 11, 1937, the writer noticed two Barn Swallows flying about intermittently throughout the day, but particularly active after sundown. It was apparent that their nest was somewhere in the immediate vicinity but for several days, notwithstanding close observation, it could not be located. On the evening of July 15 one of the birds was observed flying toward a screen door which led from a porch into the cottage occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Connors, the proprietors of the springs.

This porch has a ceiling about seven and a half feet in height, an electric light bulb with a white porcelain globe approximately five inches high and fifteen inches in circumference with a comparatively flat surface at the top four inches across. This globe is about four inches below the ceiling and within a foot of the screen door.

Not thinking for a moment that the nest would be upon the porch, but curious as to the swallows' reason for darting in and out, the writer walked toward the door, when to his surprise he saw the nest resting on the top surface of the globe.

Around a portion of this porch is a wooden railing three feet high and five feet away from the nest. The writer was informed by Miss Alice Connors that a large white cat would sit upon the railing and intently watch the nest, which held four young Barn Swallows. Here he would remain until driven away by the adult swallows darting towards it and worrying the intruder until he left. On one or two occasions the swallows actually pecked the cat with such force as make it yowl with pain as it fled.

One evening the nest was upon the porch floor and the young away, but whether the cat actually jumped, striking the globe or the nest, thereby causing it to fall, is not known.

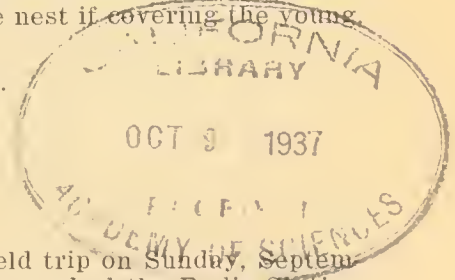
Another interesting observation of Miss Connors was that during the day when the door was opened and closed the adult bird on the nest would hurriedly leave, but in the evening when the door was opened or closed, no fear apparently disturbed the adult bird for it would remain upon the nest if covering the young or upon the edge of the nest if feeding them.

Joseph J. Webb, San Francisco. August 11, 1937.



### Shore Birding

Twenty members and ten guests attended the field trip on Sunday, September 19th. We left by automobiles from Alameda and reached the Radio Station on Bay Farm Island about 11 o'clock, where we parked the machines.



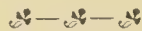
The weather was very pleasant but the tide was still high and the birds, except for a flock or two of sandpipers flying about, were loafing on spots of high ground not far distant off shore.

After luncheon we went to San Leandro Beach. The most outstanding observation here was a flock of forty or more Snowy Plovers. These we approached very closely and viewed for some time.

Finally we went to the beach at the Monarch Box Factory but found birds there in smaller numbers than on our former visits. The list for the day was twenty-six, as follows:

Eared Grebe 12	Western Willet	California Gull
California Heron 1	Yellowlegs	Ring-billed Gull
Pintail 12	Least Sandpiper	English Sparrow
Cinnamon Teal 2	L. B. Dowitcher	Meadowlark
Sparrow Hawk 2	Western Sandpiper	Brewer Blackbird
Snowy Plover 40+	Marbled Godwit	House Finch
Killdeer	Sanderling	Bryant Sparrow
Black-bellied Plover	Northern Phalarope	Alameda Song Sparrow
Hudsonian Curlew 2	Western Gull	

Members attending were: Mr. and Mrs. Stephens; Mesdames Clear, Court-right, Kelly, Myer, Saunders, Anne H. Smith; Misses Berg, Cohen, Collins, Gallagher, Kennedy, MacIver, McConnell; Messrs. Bremer, Kirker, Power, Thomas, Wells, with ten guests; Mesdames Crone, Thomas; Misses Albio, Blake, Clear, Dodge, Olson; Messrs. Cudaback, Fitter and Michel.



## Herring Gulls

On the Atlantic coast members of the Linnaean Society, New York City, band large numbers of Herring Gulls each year during the nesting season with bands of the Biological Survey and also with colored bands, so that data may be obtained later on by observation. Bands may be placed on either leg. Birds banded as adults have a black band on the other leg. The positions of the Survey and colored bands are very important.

Each year a few Herring Gulls are seen around the San Francisco Bay region and it would be of interest if we noted any wearing these colorful bracelets from the eastern coast. Be on the lookout, but, of course, be accurate as to color combinations, etc., or else the observation will be valueless. Report to the Editor, who will relay the information to the Linnaean Society.



## Wire as Perches

Wires serve commonly as perches for most of the small birds up to and including the Sparrow Hawk in size. However, the ability of Turkey Vultures to maintain equilibrium on an ordinary barbed wire of a fence rather surprised me.

Eight vultures were feeding on a dead sheep adjacent to a wire fence in a field near Cordelia, California, on June 19, 1937. As I stopped my car to observe them, two of them flew up from the ground and lit on the tops of two posts of the fence. Immediately after these had settled two others flew up and perched on the top wire of this barbed wire fence, close to the carcass. After a small amount of teetering and wing extension, they maintained a perfect balance. I believe this is the largest bird I have observed to perch on a wire.

Emerson A. Stoner, Benicia, California.

### Observations

Gordon Bolander observed at Lake Merced, September 2, 1937, Least and Western Sandpipers, Marbled Godwits, Killdeer, Northern Phalaropes, Sora Rail, Eared Grebes, Tricolored Blackbirds, Farallon Cormorant, California Heron, Mourning Dove, Heermann Gull, Kingfisher and a Parasitic Jaeger.

On September 7th on Bay Farm Island, Mr. J. Russell Mason, President of the Florida State Audubon Society, Mrs. Kelly and Mr. and Mrs. Stephens observed a Parasitic Jaeger pursuing a California Gull. It was a bird of the dark phase. He attacked the gull by coming up under it and forcing it higher and higher into the air, the gull screaming all the time, until finally the jaeger realizing the gull had no food for it departed. Later we saw it again attack another gull in much the same manner; this time the victim disgorged its food, which the jaeger caught in mid-air.

Commander and Mrs. Parmenter report having seen on September 3rd, over the ocean from the Thornton Edgemar Road, a Parasitic Jaeger pursuing a Brown Pelican.

This species is listed as a rare fall migrant in this territory, where very few have been seen. However, it may be that from some cause or other, they are more numerous this season; so it might be well for us to be on the lookout for them.

Brighton Cain reports finding a Willow Goldfinch's nest with four young on August 24th (a late date) at Dillon Beach; a Black Brant on Lake Merritt, August 10th, which on September 12th was still present; also at Lake Merritt, September 12th, a pair of Shoveller Ducks.

Mr. G. L. Ensign reports the return of two American Egrets to Richardson's Bay, August 27th.

Mrs. Kelly saw the Western Tanager in her garden in Alameda on September 13th, and Mr. and Mrs. Millard saw two females of this species in their garden in San Francisco, September 22nd.

Mr. and Mrs. Millard also report the return of the Golden-crowned Sparrows to their garden, September 22nd, the Ruby-crowned Kinglets on the 23rd, and of observing a Hairy Woodpecker, September 8th.

Commander and Mrs. Parmenter report that Shearwaters are still in evidence ( $10,000 \pm$ ), having seen them at Point Pedro, August 27th. Many Northern Phalaropes were seen, the greatest number about 5,000 on August 25th, from the San Mateo and Dumbarton Bridges, also Rough-winged Swallows (a great many) on September 6, 7 and 8 at Lake Merced, probably gathering for migration. Their first record of Sanderlings for this season (about thirty in number) on the San Francisco beach was on September 7th. Further observations were: August 25th, Dumbarton Bridge, four Eared Grebes,  $200 \pm$  White Pelicans, twelve Avocets; September 10th,  $120 \pm$  White Pelicans,  $500 \pm$  Avocets; August 25th, San Mateo Bridge,  $200 \pm$  Pintails in eclipse plumage, thirteen Hudsonian Curlews; August 17th, Lake Merced, a Cooper Hawk; 25th, Mountain View marshes, four Long-billed Curlews, two Hudsonian Curlews, and on September 10th, fourteen Long-billed Curlews; September 23rd, Golden Gate Park, Duck Hawk.

Mr. and Mrs. Stephens observed on September 26th from Thorton Beach, thousands of Shearwaters, many resting on the water close in and many others flying south as far down as Pedro Point. On the 28th, Mrs. Stephens saw three American Egrets at Manzanita and one spotted Sandpiper.

Mr. Thomas observed five Eared Grebes on Lake Merritt August 31st.

Mr. Webb reports an early date for Ruby-crowned Kinglets, September 15th, in his garden in San Francisco.

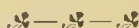
Miss Werner reported a Calliope Hummingbird in Golden Gate Park, September 4th (a new record for the park), also a Willow Woodpecker, and on the 15th, a Cooper Hawk and three Traill Flycatchers. The identifications were made by Mr. Charles W. Michael of Pasadena.



## Audubon Notes

**October Meeting:** The regular meeting will be held on Thursday, the 14th, at 8 p. m., room 19, Ferry Building.

The speaker of the evening will be Mr. Elmer C. Aldrich, whose subject will be "The Effect of a Recent Oil Pollution on Water Birds in the San Francisco Coast Area."



**October Field Trip** will be taken to Lake Merced, Sunday, the 17th. Take either No. 12 Mission Street car or Municipal car L direct to entrance of Fleishacker Playgrounds, where party will meet at 9:30 a. m.

Bring luncheon. Leader, Gordon Bolander.



**September Meeting:** The 241st regular meeting was held on the 16th in room 19, Ferry Building, with twenty-six members and guests present. President Junea W. Kelly presiding.

The following new members were elected: Mr. and Mrs. Rollo Bishop Watt of San Mateo, Dr. George S. Mirick of San Francisco and Master Robert Wells of Novato.

Mr. Howard Twining, who has made an intensive study of the Sierra Rosy Finches, *Leucosticte tephrocotis dawsoni*, during two summers, delivered a very instructive talk on this interesting species, describing their habitat and their mating and nesting activities. Mr. Twining brought with him to the meeting a pair of Rosy Finches which he had taken in the nestling stage. They were fully grown, very sturdy and lively, apparently not having suffered any ill effects from their visit to sea level and a change of food.

## Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

### For the Study and the Protection of Birds

President.....	Mrs. G. Earle Kelly.....	1311 Grand Ave., Alameda, Calif.
Corresponding Secretary.....	C. B. Lastreto.....	260 California St., San Francisco
Treasurer.....	Mrs. A. B. Stephens.....	1695 Filbert St., San Francisco

Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 P. M., Room 19, Ferry Building.

Address Bulletin correspondence to Mrs. A. B. Stephens, Editor, 1695 Filbert St., San Francisco.

Membership dues, payable January 1st, \$3.00 per year.

Student memberships, \$1.50 per year.

Life memberships, \$50.00.

Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer.